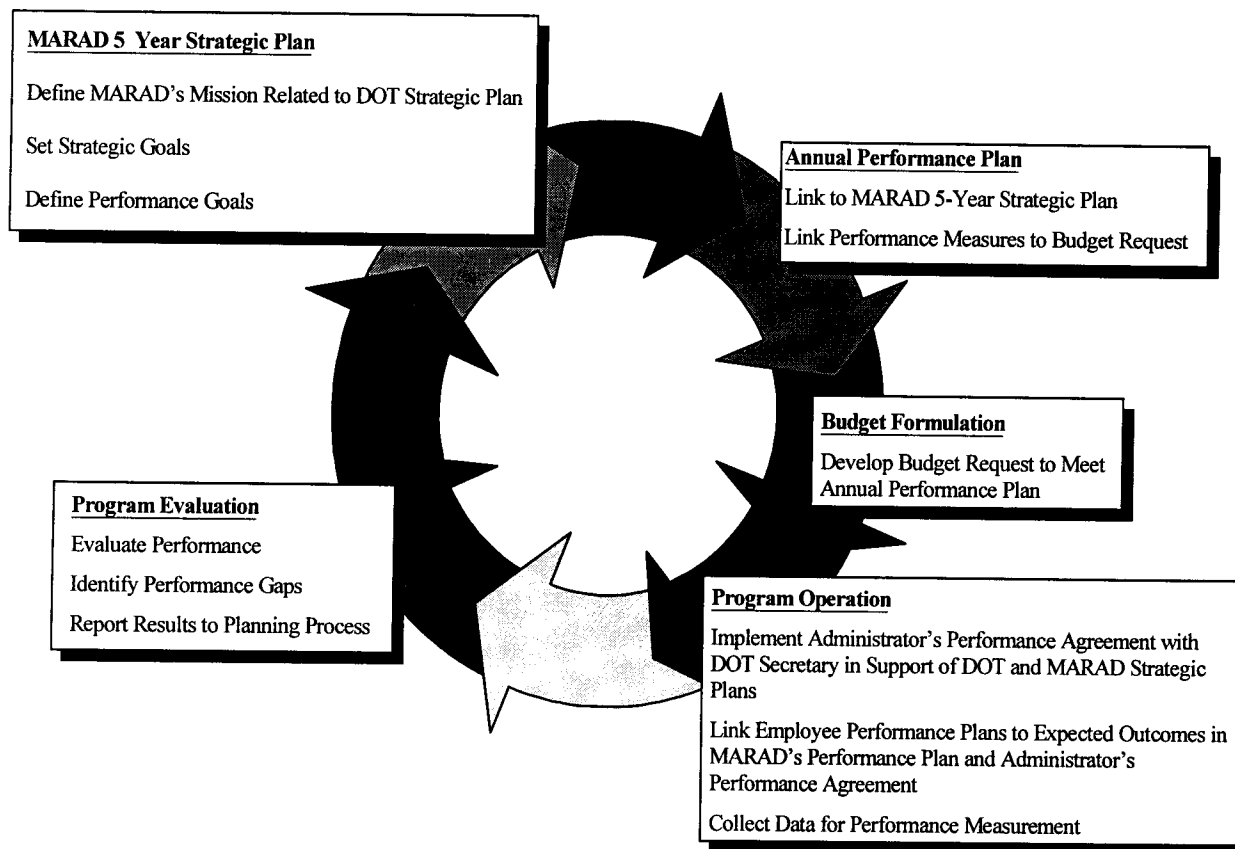


## **XII. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARAD STRATEGIC PLAN**

To fulfill the long-term goals established in this Strategic Plan, MARAD will become more visionary in its planning and more vigilant in implementing its programs and evaluating the results. The key steps in the process are shown in Figure 2. The process is continual; each phase depends on the flow of information from one step to the next, which improves effectiveness with each fiscal cycle. This approach aims to build a high performance, outcome-oriented organization and is consistent with GPRA requirements.

**Figure 2**  
**MARAD GPRA PROCESS**  
**Development and Implementation**



### **Planning**

The planning phase includes the development of the MARAD Five Year Strategic Plan; the Annual Performance Plan; and the President's annual budget request.

### *Strategic Plan*

The MARAD five-year strategic plan is the starting point, and establishes a set of outcome-oriented strategic and performance goals. The goals are developed based on MARAD's mission and legislative mandates, and align with the strategic goals established in DOT's Strategic Plan. MARAD's strategic goals also reflect the views of key stakeholders, including Congress and the Administration, State and local governments, the private sector, Agency employees, and the American public, obtained through reviews and outreach efforts. Stakeholder involvement is important to ensure that our efforts and resources are directed to achieving key results. The Strategic Plan also takes account of the realities of the internal and external conditions that may impact the attainment of our strategic and performance goals.

### *Annual Performance Plan*

The next step involves development of the Annual Performance Plan. The Plan links the long-term goals in the Strategic Plan to more detailed, year-specific performance targets. The Annual Performance Plan also explains in more detail the processes, technologies, resources and data that will be needed to achieve the performance goals and measure the outcomes. The first of these Annual Performance Plans was submitted to Congress in February 1998, along with MARAD's FY 1999 budget request. In developing the performance measures, MARAD sought to tie the indicators to its strategic goals, respond to competing demands, and propose activities that can demonstrate results within budget constraints.

Performance indicators should accurately measure program results. Some include quantitative indicators -- such as utilization rates, frequency rates and transaction or production rates; others include qualitative indicators -- such as timeliness, reliability, etc.; financial measures; percentage coverage; as well as others. The important factor is that the performance indicators provide a basis for comparing actual program results with the established program goals, and that the measures are outcome, rather than output-oriented.

### *Annual Budget*

The fiscal year budget request seeks sufficient resources for program operation and to enable the Agency to meet the targets identified in the Annual Performance Plan. Annual performance goals will be adjusted at the beginning of the fiscal year to reflect the appropriations received from Congress to fund the Agency's program activities during the year.

### **Program Implementation**

This is the phase where both Agency and employee accountability is most evident.

### *Administrator's Performance Agreement*

Each fiscal year, the Maritime Administrator enters into an Annual Performance Agreement with the Secretary of Transportation, which establishes a consensus between the Secretary of Transportation and the Maritime Administrator on the goals that MARAD intends to achieve during the fiscal year in fulfillment of both the DOT and the MARAD Strategic Plans.

### *Employee Performance Plans*

Each employee, in consultation with his/her supervisor, develops an individual annual performance plan, including targets and standards related to Agency programs and the attainment of the strategic goals identified in the five-year Strategic Plan.

### *Data Collection*

Qualitative and quantitative data identified in the Annual Performance Plan and the Administrator's Performance Agreement will be collected as part of ongoing program implementation. Through this information, Congress, the Administration and the American people will know whether MARAD's programs are meeting intended goals. This information will be valuable for the Agency, as well as for the Office of Management and Budget and Congress, in evaluating performance and determining future resource allocation.

### *Data Validation and Verification*

Data used to measure the achievement of performance goals generally will be obtained from existing information sources. However, in some cases, the data are not currently available to MARAD and will need to be obtained, either directly by MARAD or through other sources. Measures will be taken by program managers to ensure the quality of program data generated by MARAD or obtained from outside sources. In most cases, data will be compared to previous data obtained from the same source. To the extent that similar data are available from other sources, MARAD will compare the "primary" source data to data from alternative sources.

### **Program Evaluation**

Although the Agency's programs are informally evaluated on a continuing basis to identify performance gaps, GPRA also requires MARAD to conduct in-depth evaluations of its programs according to recognized research principles. Unlike the past, program evaluation will now focus on the contribution of individual programs to the attainment of the Agency's goals. MARAD will be able to assess what, if any, gaps exist between expected and actual outcomes, identify processes that are in most need of improvement, set attainable improvement goals, and allocate resources to correct problems by feeding back to the planning phase.

During the time frame covered by this Strategic Plan, MARAD has committed to complete an evaluation of its Student Incentive Payment program during FY 1998, and to initiate two additional evaluations in FY 1999: MSP/VISA and federally funded maritime education and training. The process will include study design, collection of empirical data, development and analysis of extraneous factors that may have contributed to achievement of the outcome goals, and assessment of the contribution of the programs to the attainment of DOT's and MARAD's strategic goals. These results will then be used to determine whether actions are necessary to improve the performance of the programs.